

If Democrats Controlled the House...

A Weekly Taste of Their Legislative Agenda



What sort of legislation might Democrats enact if they control the House? There is little need to speculate —just look at what they are introducing this Congress while in the minority. Below is another example of a bill the Democrats might try to move if given the opportunity.

Proposal: H.R. 1448, Federal Response to Eliminate Eating Disorders Act

Sponsor: Rep. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI)

Summary: This legislation undertakes a number of actions aimed at federally dealing with eating disorders. Among other things, the bill requires the Director of NIH to create a budget for and expand research on eating disorders, and create a task force for research on eating disorders. The Act would also direct the HHS Secretary to undertake actions to combat eating disorders. Finally, it would amend Medicaid to expand coverage for eating disorders.

Problems with the Bill: No one wants to see a loved one's life taken over by an eating disorder. These are serious health concerns that, from a societal standpoint, certainly merit greater research and attention. The question we must ask, however, is whether this legislation would be a wise and appropriate use of taxpayer dollars by the federal government when existing debts and spending commitments already pose serious threats to the wellbeing of the country.

Because the legislation calls for new spending without suggesting where the money will come from, we must assume these new programs would be funded with borrowed money. We cannot afford to ignore the fact that America's national debt is now greater than our GDP. Even if we could afford it, however, conservatives understand that not every problem in the United States can or should require federal action. The funds consumed by these programs would most likely be put to better use in the private sector. Waste is rampant in the federal government, and there should be no implicit confidence that this new responsibility would be managed in an efficient and useful manner.

Even aside from these questions, this legislation should be discouraged because it fosters greater dependency upon an ever-increasing federal government as the solution to all of society's ills. It is seldom wise to extend federal powers beyond those areas the people and the States cannot adequately (or more appropriately) handle themselves. When we unnecessarily cede authority to a centralized power, we chip away at the principles of freedom and self governance upon which this country was founded. The mentality which looks to the federal government as the first solution to a problem fails to recognize that such a system of dependence will create more problems than it can ever solve.

Reminder: RSC staffers and interns are encouraged to send other examples of questionable legislation to Rick.Eberstadt@mail.house.gov. Special thanks to Jim Tobin for bringing this bill to our attention.